Angel Notes

0/GODO

angel notes.
the matter of knight’s arms.
...and over count 1999
type: other

The aircraft rose further up in the troposphere.
The sea of ashen clouds had yet to disappear.

Iron wings soared in the grey sky, to annihilate the common enemy of the human race.

At the end of the battle, all but one of the aircrafts that had participated in the mission were destroyed. Perhaps I was lucky that an obsolete AI was piloting it. The AI controlled plane was the only one that was unaffected by the heat of the enemy.

I flew on alone. As I thought, the organic pulsations echoing in the machine were mine alone.

I opened the hangar and drew out my gun.
The air flowing in the machine was cold, burning my lungs.
The internal temperature had reached below zero; the coat I wear carried minimal purpose.
It was at a level that would just barely sustain organic life.

This aircraft, which had only been intended to act as a transport for flight-capable species, was not equipped with weaponry.
If I am to fight, I have to risk my life.

Arctic cold and rampaging winds.
The corpses of my comrades, spinal fluid leaking out from the noses and ears, lay behind me.
An old aircraft which could crash at any moment…
The situation was so absolutely bleak that I felt like singing out loud.

Holding the Black Barrel I had modified for sniping, I did nothing but wait for the enemy.
For the moment the enemy would enter the scope.
For the moment I could pull the trigger and be at ease.

Seven days had been added to the clock on the plane.
Only seven days have passed.
My paralyzed brain felt that I could stay like this for another month, or maybe another year.
My body was always on the verge of collapsing.

Angel Notes

How many days and months has it been?
My mind,
My language,
My self…

Just when I lost everything, I recollected everything.
The gun’s sight caught the enemy.
I pulled the trigger without hesitation.

My brain punched through its limits and was scorched.
Just one brief moment before I fell into unconsciousness…
Just one slight moment before I blacked out…
Just a moment before I was about to fade away, I witnessed the form of my enemy.

How…beautiful…

----------Between a rift in the clouds, I saw an angel.

Angel Notes

After I came back home from work, I saw an angel in my room holding a guitar.

...I guess I've finally gone insane.

Long, blond, wavy hair, a pure white one-piece dress, a face that left hints of girlish youth and... a ring of light floating on top of her head? If this wasn't an angel, I sure as hell didn't know what one was supposed to be.

"Good evening."
The Angel bowed with an awkward smile.

After rubbing my eyes, I walked inside. The Angel kept standing in the middle of the room holding the guitar, and for some reason was looking at me excitedly.

"Ok, who the hell are you?"

"I'm an angel," she laughed with a smile.

"Yeah, I can tell. What I meant was, why are you in my room? If you're here to sell yourself, you came to the wrong room. I hate to break it to you, but I'm not making enough cash to buy an angel."

"Um, I'm not here for that. Um, what's the best way of putting it? I'd like to do your housework."

"I can do that by myself. Get out."

" Now, I just can't do that. You see, I can do anything!"

Since she was full of confidence, I let her clean the place up. The result: a scene far more gruesome than a tragedy.

"...um, my cooking's perfect." the angel said, quickly sticking her index finger up.

"No thanks. I can't take factory-produced food. It has too much nutrition and the veins will rupture. You get what I'm saying?"

The Angel nodded. Seems like she at least knew that I was a human and not part of the A-Ray species.

"Ok. So, what else can you do?"

"I can play the guitar!" she said happily, stroking the guitar.

Her blue guitar was one of the types that used electricity to produce sound. It wasn't the kind of merchandise that went well with angels.

Angel Notes

And not just that. She just plain sucked.

"Get out." I took the Angel's hands and kicked her out from the window.

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Days passed and I went to the hospital. "There is nothing wrong with your brain," answered a fish-faced doctor.

And so, every day after finishing work, I wasted energy chasing away that Angel. Eventually, I gave up bothering to.

"The sky, it's dark," the Angel muttered as she looked out at the sky from the window.

An Angel that didn't even know that? Figures. She didn’t seem to be one of the artificial angels amongst the A-Rays.

"Hey. Where'd you come from? I’m guessing you’re not an A-Ray on this side of the rift.”

"I'm not an A-Ray."

“Then what are you?”

"I'm a being that was created from the hopes and dreams of the people living in this city. That's why I'm so pretty. I’m glad that everyone had such pure souls."

The angel twirled around happily. The edge of her skirt fluttered like a dress.

Now that she mentioned it, she seemed unreal. The angel was too beautiful to be an inhabitant of the Land of Steel. Her golden hair was so dazzling that its projected poison.

So that means...she's an illusion that only I could see?

"Erm, so why is the manifestation of everybody's imagination in my room?"

"Because it's you who killed me!"

She seemed to be mad that I didn't realize that, more so than the fact that I "killed" her. When I asked her if she came here to get revenge, she answered, "What's revenge?"

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The angel turned out to be pretty handy and learned many things gradually. She now grasps what it means to clean. The only exception was anything involving the guitar.

"I'm not improving with the guitar at all. I'm playing it just like I'm imagining it, but

what I'm thinking and what's coming out are completely different."

Ah, so there was a song she wanted to play. Of course, she wouldn't get any better.

"No shit. That guitar hasn't been tuned."

Yep. It was screwed up from the beginning.

The Angel tilted her head and asked, "What's tuning?"

Angel Notes

A female body with a pair of bird wings on the back. If it also has a beautiful form, then that life form is called an angel.

My job was to shoot down twenty of those angels a day. That's why it wasn't that surprising for me to be seen as an enemy by all who were angels.

I came to this city a year ago. The strangest city within the land of steel…

No plants are able to grow on the soil of this planet. However, there were numerous grey-colored trees within the city, and even a withered grass field on top of a hill. In the hill at the center of the city, there were two gigantic trees that covered the sky. These trees reached the sea of clouds, and they were called the World Trees for their size.

I chose my job as an angel hunter. In this city, angels come down from the sky and attacked people every day. Although they do attack people, they're only at the annoying level of wild dogs, and not many were actually affected. But if we left them alone, the city would be filled with angels, so the city council had to hire hunters. I don't know if the angels have a set location they come down to, but I saw a lot of them in the forest of the city outskirt.

Pulling the trigger of the gun, I absorbed the impact on my shoulder. The naked angel fell down and hit the floor as it was shot right in the forehead. There were countless leaves and countless dead angels on the floor of the forest.
Going across the rough surface of the earth, I return to the walls that surround the city. A beast man who was appointed another area was waving his hand as he approached me.

"Hey. How's it going?"

"Not much. Three coppers per kill. If I consider the cost of the bullet, I won't even have a single copper for myself."

"It's because you use a gun. If you're a man, use your body."

"Well I'm sorry but I'm not that well-built. I even need to take medication in order to get oxygen. I'm doing my best just to live."

"I see. You humans are *so* inconvenient."

"Indeed. Being human is inconvenient."

Yes, in this world humans are certainly inconvenient. That's why human beings in the old age made a lot of creative tools. As a result, A-rays were invented, and *that* ended in the Great War.

That's how pure human beings became extinct.

Angel Notes

With a free loader called the Angel staying at my house, I increased my work load. *That* angel ate food. Although the materials produced at the factory are free, there's a limit to it. I had to increase my daily quota from twenty to thirty.

...how ironic is it to kill more angels to feed an angel?

"You're working hard lately," the beast man continued.

"I'm just releasing my stress. Those targets actually look like the cause of my stress and make this lame job exciting."

I couldn't help it and let it out. The beast man tilted his head.

"It's a good thing that you're dedicated to your job. But watch out, they said there were some Knights who were inspecting the forest. I heard a Demonic Sword user was looking at you."

"…what does that mean? Is there an Aristoteles coming this way?"

"I don’t know. More importantly, our pay was supposedly lowered again this month. *There’s* a more realistic problem."

"Right. Is the financial bureau ready to kill us now?"

"I never done anything wrong, though," said a prisoner who murdered over fifty human species.

The beast man sighed as he looked at the pile of dead angels scattered across the forest.

He muttered a bad idea. "Hey, you think we can eat them?"

I shrugged as I made the obvious reply. "Forget it. You'll be punished by heaven, I bet."

3/Roman

On my way home from work, I got caught by an angel. Not the Angel at home, but an angel from the actual A-ray subspecies.

Angel Notes

"You're not very sociable lately. Rejecting an invitation from a pretty person like me, you must be impotent!"

She said that as she pushed me into a bar and offered me a glass of alcohol.

...it's true I haven't spoke to her for about a half a year.

While we were having some casual conversation, a bunch of hecklers butted in. They said the angel should accompany the A-rays instead of that human. I thought so too, but she shut them up with a glare.

"I'm sorry, were you offended?" she asked.

"Yeah, I don't feel good about it, but they're right. Why do you care about someone like me? Don't A-rays find lovers in order to produce stronger species? I won't be able to create strong children."

"It doesn't hurt to make an exception, does it? Besides, our outside appearance matters more to us. There aren’t many species that are close to the angels, and you're my type. There's no problem," she said as she drank the purple fizz in her glass.

She looked like a real angel. Her wings weren't used for flying; they were a dish to collect the heavy particles in the surroundings. The angel species are able to fly without wings. Originally the protectors of the A-rays called the Six Sisters, angels are considered to have fighting power equal to the Knights who carried the Demonic Swords.

In other words, they can perform destructive activity akin to a nuclear bomb on their own.

As we drank more alcohol and our true characters were more or less revealed, she asked a weird question. “Hey, why do you use a gun?"

"Humans can't use Gin like you A-rays, you know. Our strength is limited as well, so it's natural we rely on weapons. What other practical firearms are there other than a gun?"

"Hmm. That means humans aren't made to fight. But why do you still fight?"

"...let's see. If I recall correctly, my family was killed when I was small. That's when I dug up a gun and practiced shooting so I could take revenge."

"Oh. Typical."

Yeah, it's typical. I tried to laugh, but I couldn't. I never succeeded in trying to make

a forced smile.

"But doesn't a family mean they were of the same species? I never heard of any humans living around here."

"I haven't told you, have I? I was originally born in West Land. The other side of the great rift."

"West Land... you mean the continent that got wiped out by the Black Aristoteles-----?"

Surprised, she fell silent. When West Land was completely scorched, I was a kid of only 12 or 13. An old story from almost seven years ago.

"By the way, do you still do that job?"

"I do. There isn't any other job opportunity for a halfwit like me. I don't want to be kept under protection as a rare species either. ...what, are you still complaining? They are different from you. Don't be so concerned, it's silly."

"I am concerned. I don't mind others doing it, but it makes me angry to think that you of all people are killing angels every day. Hey, why do you hunt angels?"

--------That’s because I’m twisted.

“…it's my job, I can't help it.”

I said that without looking at her eyes. She gave me a cold look, seeing through my lie.

"You're right. You've quit thinking. That's why you don't feel any pain. But, on the other hand, you don't feel any happiness either. You never have fun by recalling the past either. Your life must be like the machine you use. That's why you need to rely on something simple like logical reasoning in order to motivate yourself.

The angel said that with a discontent expression. But what's so wrong with being a machine? A theory that higher life forms have emotions was a real fantasy.

"What's wrong with you today? You seem to be very prickly."

"No kidding. It's because you won't talk to me"

"A drunken angel isn't very appealing."

"What do you mean? I may look like this, but I'm very popular in my home town."

Answering, “Yeah, yeah,” I sipped on my glass. I was supposed to restrain myself

tonight, but I'm passing out before her.

The angel asked me her last question.

"Hey, why do you fight?"

That's because I don't want to die.

"Then, why don't you want to die?"

Probably because I want to live.

"Why do you want to live?"

That's obvious.

Because I never got to experience anything good.

"...is that so? Needing logical reason in order to live, you're an underdeveloped life form."

After saying that, she left first.

But how can I help it? Because the human race kept on living by their instinct, the world died once. Having to rely on pessimistic reasoning is the only punishment given to the humans who were left behind.

4/After Images

Slipping through the busy streets of the city, I returned to my room.

The Angel was stubbornly still there.

Angel Notes

It'll be winter soon. The temperature would break the critical freezing point and the city would soon literally freeze. But I didn't think of passing my second winter in this city.

"There's a lot of commotion in the city lately," the Angel said as she looked down from the window.

The large window, larger than the Angel, looked like the window of a church that I once saw in a picture book. The Angel with blond hair and bright white wings bent over with a sad face. Behind her, the city and two World Trees were blurry like a mirage.

...everything was inside a gunmetal world. It was a nightmare. Only this Angel was pretty.

The Angel looked down at the distant ground. The city was packed with people who were trying to leave.

"Um. What is everyone doing?"

"They are moving out altogether. The neighboring area was destroyed by a three thousand-meter Aristoteles. Calculating its route, they said it will pass through this city in three days."

"Above me?"

"Above us. It might collide with the World Tree. Either way, everything in its path is destroyed. It’s obvious why people are running away."

"Oh, so that's why everyone's so desperate," the Angel said as she absentmindedly looked down.

Glancing at the Angel who's just standing there, I started packing my belongings. I shoved winter gear and clothing, personal air maker, and several guns into my bag. I decided to leave everything else behind.

"Are you going too?"

"Yeah, because I don't want to die. But not right away. I'll go out on my own after the commotion down there dies down."

The Angle sadly lowered her eyes. Because she’s always happy for no reason, just that made her look really lonely.

"...this may be the last time, so let me you ask you a question. What were you after all?"

Angel Notes

The Angel sighed without any seriousness.

I can only make out that she isn’t from the existing species of angels. That's why I wanted to know the truth, at least in the end.

The Angel replied plainly. "What everyone calls the Aristoteles."

You didn't know? The Angel looked at me like that.

Aristoteles. The things that suddenly appeared on this planet and became the enemy of all living things. An unpredictable enemy. Not only was there no method of communication, but their biological structure as living things was unclear.

And that was in a little city like this, in a room of a deserted tower, shaped like an angel, and playing a guitar? What kind of joke was that? No living things on this planet are able to stand against this life form, what a punishment by God.

"Really? You?"

"Oh, no. The thing at the base of this city, to be exact. What I was, was shot down and fell to this place. It was an instant death. Trees grew and people started living on top of that."

The Angel goes on. “This planet no longer has any power to raise life. That's why greens wouldn't grow, but if it was on top of another life instead of the earth, they would.

"I'm normally not that kind of thing, but I ended up like this. What everyone calls the World Trees are the wings of what used to be me. ...umm, in other words, the wings’ feathers. The falling feathers took the shape of what I used to look like. I was originally that kind of life form. It's not the angels that were originally on this planet."

"But you're still shaped like an angel."

"Because I’m everyone's fantasy. The body of what I used to be died already, but it seems something like my mind was still alive. But a concept of a mind never existed to me. The species of this planet have a wonderful ability to form a shape out of knowledge. Using everyone as a model, I formed a shape out of the knowledge that I had but never used.

“The reason I'm shaped like an angel is because it's the closest image to the shape of what I used to be. That's how I was able to communicate with everyone by creating the same thought circuit. I was able to become myself by taking the imaginary form of angel."

Angel Notes

The Angel detached herself from a thing called Aristoteles by becoming an illusion. She was able to acknowledge herself for the first time by becoming something not herself. She's nothing but the realization of an image of an angel that the people imagined on their own.

"Are you… happy?"

The Angel cheerfully replied, “Yes.”

Only an illusion stood here.

“…I see. An angel can only live within an imagination."

I happened to recall the definition of an angel. That it had wings, a halo, were really beautiful, and then, it's only an illusion…

After all, a thing that brings you hope can only be a fantasy.

When I thought about that, the angel sadly replied, “You're right.”

"I wish I was a real angel."

With an appearance that looked more like an angel than an actual angel, she said something like that.

5/How a Star is Born

A huge flying cross moved within the ashen clouds. That thing changed its course and started disappearing from sight as it kept on pouring the rain of judgment.

It seems like the battle is over.

The air plane I was on kept increasing its altitude through the troposphere. There

was a big hole in the plane’s side.

The wounded iron bird could no longer listen to what it's told to do. It just kept on flying to its end, as if it's the dream of all who have wings.

Sooner or later, it will fly out of the ashen sea of clouds and reach the stratosphere. My body wasn't built so strong that I could breathe at such place. But I don't have to worry about that. There's no guarantee I would be alive by the time I reached there.

I leaned against the wall as I brought my gun down.

The door of the hangar remained opened. Just like before, cold air blew in and I could see the earth very well. Land without any colors. Even the ocean in the distance was colorless.

It’s a world that’s completely dead.

Even so, this world of steel felt so precious. My vision blurred.

I saw something like this five years ago.

That day, the enemy that appeared through the clouds was more beautiful than anything. A pair of wings and a figure that somehow resembled a human. I shot that thing that looked like an angel. A bullet that was nothing more than a bean to that thing drilled into its forehead and dropped the angel.

That moment. The instant I pulled the trigger, our eyes met through the scope. There was no communication. That's all.

But since then, I kept dreaming of that thing falling down the sea of clouds, forever.

.....

The angel that accompanied the plane woke up. One of her wings was horribly ripped.

Being a high ranking species of the A-rays, she was naturally forced to join this mission, and jumped in here after getting heavily wounded.

She only came here to rest her wings, but we were out of luck. The moment she came inside the hangar, the arrow of light hit this plane that was too close to the Cross.

The light pierced her wing and the body of the plane, and took out her consciousness and the plane's AI.

And now, several minutes later, the unconscious angel slowly woke up.

Angel Notes

“Good Morning.” When I said that to her, she turned around and looked outside.

The thing called the Aristoteles was disappearing in the distance.

I told the angel who was spacing out our total losses and the success of the mission.

The angel joyously approached. She crawled on the floor since she couldn't stand up, but her hand slipped on something wet.

My blood was pooling on the floor and had dyed the angel's body red.

"When you… shoved me aside?"

Without answering her question, I just gazed outside. Over the limitless clouds, the airplane kept on flying upwards.

The sky that I saw for the first time was different from what I read in the books.

"The sky, it's red"

Repeating a phrase that I once heard somewhere, I couldn't keep strength in my hand anymore. The Black Gun fell to the floor.

"The Black Gun. So, you really were the person who shot the Bird down."

"...I guess. That's what people say. But I used all my luck back then. Look at this mess now."

"Idiot. Because you saved me..."

"How can I help it? I wouldn't want a pretty girl like you dying in front of my eyes."

I said something really showy. It was so silly that it made me laugh.

That doesn't suit your character.

She said that too.

We just kept on laughing without looking each other's way.

It was a small, weak, and gentle voice. "You've changed. You weren't this honest with your feelings before. So, it *is* true that you've found someone other than me."

...I wonder if there was really such thing? Although if it's the angel who said she’d rather be a fake, she must be still waiting in my room for me to return.

They say that angels cure one's mind, not one's body.

Angel Notes

"But that's not true. People don't change because of others. I was always like this. I just acted like I didn't care, but I really was a good person. You couldn't tell, could you?"

"Oh, really?"

"Yeah, really. I wanted to become a hero when I was small, too. I was immature. Probably now, too. ...that's why you should go. You can probably still fly down to the ground even with one wing. You don't need to come with me."

She stood up and looked at me sternly for some reason.

"Are you going to be okay? Alone till the end?"

"Didn't I tell you? I want to look cool. Because I wanted to be a hero. And I want to be alone at the end… because I was all alone till now."

I think my clumsy forced smile went well.

Probably the best in my life.

"Good bye, then..."

Flapping her single wing, she flew out.

She looked like a fish of an angel that swam in the red sea.

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I stood up and sat in the cockpit. Not knowing what I'm doing, I tried fixing the broken AI. If I still have some luck left, my fate might change.

When I closed my eyes, I heard a voice.

"Why did you fight?"

"Because I didn't want to die, of course."

"Why didn't you want to die?"

"Because I want to live, of course."

"...then, why do you want to live?"

That's obvious. It's because------

At the farthest limit of my memory…

Angel Notes

Only that answer was different from before.

6/Glitter Love

Just when I was about to leave the city, I got caught by a messenger of the military. Someone must have remembered an old story from five years ago and enlisted me in this mission.

When I returned to my room to pick up the Black Barrel that I left to rot, the Angel was still there.

"Are you going to fight that?"

"Looks like it. The Knights are assembling too, and the military's eager to do it. They're aiming to at least change the Cross's course. If that's it, then the possibility isn't zero."

Angel Notes

"It's impossible. No one understands what an Aristoteles is. That isn't a life form from this planet. There is no, chance of winning."

"How could that be? We have already defeated three Aristoteles’s. If we have more fire power than them, it's not an unstoppable opponent."

"I don't know about that. They can't be judged by this planet's common sense. That's why even a concept of death doesn't exist for them. They won't stop until they achieve their objective."

"Objective? You guys had such thing?"

"Yes. It's not our own objective, but we do. They arrived here to fulfill the wish of this planet. ...this planet died from the influence of the life forms that lived on it. The planet itself doesn't have a feeling of grief. Even perishing by the influence of its own life forms is alright. A planet only carries a will; it carries no meaning."

“But there was an exception. The planet is able to forgive because life forms follow the same fate as the planet. But the human species were able to live on, even on the dead land. This planet was frightened by the existence that kept on living on top of its corpse and cried out for help at its end. ‘Please, wipe out the life forms that are still alive.’"

"...I see. So that's who you guys are."

When I muttered that, the Angel said no, as she shook her head.

"The only ones who were able to hear the cry of the planet were other planets. I... no, *we* were the highest-ranking species of those planets that received the will of this planet. For example, the Aristoteles that was called the Heaven's Corpse... what I used to be, was the most superior individual on Venus."

"Wha...t?'

Without knowing, I lost my breath. Our enemies were species that ruled over the aliens of other planets, where our common sense doesn't apply. The strongest life form on a planet; in other words, the planet itself. The human species who survived on this planet, simply put, were fighting eight planets.

“...yeah, there's no chance of winning. You got that right."

The Angel nodded sadly.

"On top of that, they’re right. ...geez. If humans accepted the prophecy in the 2000th year, we would have gotten away by just being the victim."

Angel Notes

"No...! The ones who are wrong are the Aristoteles. They don't have any will. Isn't it a bad thing to erase lives without having a will?"

The Angel who had learned the common sense of this planet said that. But there was no longer any notion of right or wrong on this planet. The only simple rule was that you either live or die.

That's why---- because I lived till now, I'm not going to be on the dying side.

"It won't change anything. I don't have any reason to fight either. I probably will never have any. At the point where we're just killing each other for no reason, we are equal. Isn't that the simplest way of life?"

The Angel won't answer.

"What are you going to do? Even if you have the same objective, that Cross and you are different things, right? Your body will be destroyed along with this city. You said you died instantly, but that's by our standards. I doubt the concept of death on this planet applies to a life form from another planet. Aren't you able to move already?"

The downward facing Angel shook her head.

"No. If I move, the outer shell of the wings will shatter. All the leaves of what everyone calls the World Tree will fall. If that happens, uncountable numbers of angels will come pouring down. Everyone will die before the Aristoteles comes," the gloomy Angel said.

She's right. The number of leaves on the tree that reaches the clouds is far more than the number of surviving human species. Billions of released angels will cover the whole planet in no time.

"But you'll die if you don't!"

"It's all right. I am the people here. I am only an image created by them."

"It's just that they provided you knowledge. You are different from us. To you, we are just simple accessories. You should hurry up and take it off, so you'll feel light."

The Angel smiled sadly, and again shook her head.

"You're an idiot."

"I know I am. But I can't help it. ...I love this place."

The teary-eyed Angel said that with a feeling of satisfaction.

How can I argue with that?

"...Okay. I suppose that can't be helped."

As the Angel nodded her head, she stared at me. Her straight eyes were asking me, *how about you?*

"I'm going to die soon, you know. I think you can at least tell me that and the heavens won't punish you." The punishment that came to this planet irresponsibly said that.

As I carried my belongings on my back, I replied.

"Yeah. I'll be honest. I love this city too. ...besides, since that moment, I was possessed by you."

The Angel opened her eyes widely in surprise.

"...um. What does that mean?"

"It must mean I've fallen in love with you, since then. I realized that now."

When I threw out the words, the Angel’s expression sparkled, but she quickly put her head down.

"But I'm not a human being."

The Angel grasped something like that just now?

....Geez, She's a real idiot.

"You know, there's only one human being left in the world and that's me. What does that have to do with anything?"

"Oh. You're right," the Angel nodded.

There's nothing else to talk about. I started walking outside as the time of the military gathering approached.

"See you. Go to someone with a better dream next time. You can become a real angel if you do that."

My imagination was always twisted somewhere.

When I looked back at her one last time, the angel answered with a gentle expression: no.

Angel Notes

"There's no such thing as a real angel. I’d rather stay a fake one."

The fantasy said that she will stay a fantasy.

Is that so? Convinced, I left the room.

All that was left in the room was my older sister's guitar and the fake angel.